



Alaska Alternate Assessment

Consequential Survey

Open-ended Remarks

2010-2011

July 11, 2011

Executive Summary

This report summarizes the open-ended comments provided by Assessors who administered the Alternate Assessment to at least one eligible student in 2011. This first section provides a summary for six open-ended response stems.

One hundred seventy-five Assessors responded to the survey. Only items with three or more responses are included in the summary; responses with fewer than three comments were not deemed reliable enough to report publicly, but will be considered by DRA and EED in training development.

Please note: Assessor responses were copied from the survey tool. Errors in the reported responses are present in the original submission.

Six open-ended response stems (#2, 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10) gathered at least three responses, summarized below:

#2: The students I teach need more instruction on functional living skills.

A few assessors responded that they do not teach students; they only administer the Alternate Assessment to them. Of the rest, the overwhelming majority believed that functional living skills needed to be a high priority for students with significant cognitive delays. Most believed that the academic content delivered in the Standard and ELAS administrations of the Alternate Assessment was important, but that daily living skills that might lead to greater independence was very important.

#5: My instruction in writing focuses on:

Only three assessors responded to this open-ended question. All three focus their writing instruction on basic writing skills: List making, personal information, statements about a story or researched facts on a topic of the student's choice.

#7: I have sufficient access to accommodations and assistive devices when administering the Alternate Assessment.

Three assessors responded to this question. One wishes for more, one felt that the window was too short to employ sufficient AT and accommodations (parent conferences and spring break fall within her testing window) and one provides many of the tools herself.

#8: The students I teach who are taking the Alternate Assessment are likely to meet the academic standards assessed by the Alternate Assessment.

Executive Summary

Most of the respondents to this question described a diverse population of students participating in the Alternate Assessment, some of whom would meet the alternate academic standards and some of whom would not.

Executive Summary

#9: The students I teach who are taking the Alternate Assessment are improving in their academic skills.

Two respondents to this question believe that their students are improving academically; one stated that his or her students are not at the academic level. Three others were unsure how to answer the question.

#10: I am teaching differently since the Alternate Assessment was implemented.

Six of the eight respondents believe that their teaching is different now.

Miscellaneous remarks – these remarks were not directly related to the above queries.

2. The students I teach need more instruction on functional living skills...

The students are still learning to read and do simple math when they are approaching their teenage years. I am not sure they are ready to take care of themselves.

I am an administrator and do not teach at this time. However, I strongly agree that these students need more instruction on functional living skills!

I teach preschool students with severe disabilities and functional living skills are a big part of their IEP's

They can always use more

I think students need instruction in areas that will help them function in life after high school. If that is our main purpose, then a large part of our efforts should focus there. Reading and Math relate to that concept.

she seems to be at her limit of learning academics and needs to be able to do some caring for herself

They need to learn to live as independently as possible. They feel great once they know they can do something all by themselves. They need so much more time to practice basic skills and generalize these skills throughout various environments. It empowers them when they learn new skills and they can do it on their own. Participating in academic classes are great, but it limits the time to concentrate on needed skills which they need to become as independent as possible as an adult. We also need to look at their level of interest in participating in general education classes. Many of these students have strengths and interests in certain areas (i.e., music, PE, drama, art, etc.) and we, as professionals need to adapt the learning environments so they can be successful. They need to be included as much as possible with their peers, but not at the expense of ignoring teaching functional living skills.

I put a lot of focus on functional skills...I hope to involve the students in the community more in the future to solidify this knowledge.

They are taught functional living skills.

At this point in their education, their parents are still actively engaged in teaching this. We already teach many of these skills at school.

As I am an itinerant special education teacher, I am trained to give the alternate assessment. I gave the A.A. to students I do not teach.

The students I teach are capable of both improving functional living skills and academic based.

The curriculum based instruction in reading, writing, and math is important, but many of these students need to learn hygiene, dressing for the weather, opening and closing containers and feeding needs.

2. The students I teach need more instruction on functional living skills... continued

The need to be able to survive in a world without parent or teacher support and every opportunity toward that is making life better for them

A majority of my student's disabilities would place them in a category of functional learning as a primary goal.

Adaptive skill levels are low.

They lack basic life skills

I think all students need more instruction on functional living skills, but current trends in education emphasize higher levels of academic achievement as if all students were preparing for continuing education / college track. Real life skills / functional living has been overly de-emphasized.

They are way below academic levels and will not be able to achieve a grade level knowledge; they are currently about 8 grades behind where they are supposed to be.

Out of six students I have two that can participate in an EXGLE academic program, the others concentrate on life skills.

The students that I teach are need of a curriculum that is best suited to their individual needs. In outside resource room classes, the focus and attention that these students needed could not be served. Also, their cognitive abilities are at a range far too low to pass the curriculum with special education accommodations and modifications.

Because their cognitive ability prevents them from assimilation into adult situations, I needs to be taught.

I believe this student would benefit from learning functional life skills as well as core subjects.

This will be an on-going concern for my student due to intensely slow development. She is now almost 9 years old, and at an infant level globally.

Most have severe to significant cognitive impairments.

The students get plenty of instruction to functional living skills already.

The students that I work with do not have the language skills of their age appropriate peers. We strive to assist our students to be able to be self-sufficient with personal needs so their peers are more acceptable with interactions while still striving to raise cognitive abilities.

We spend quite a bit of time addressing functional living skills.

2. The students I teach need more instruction on functional living skills... continued

Some of my students have significant behavioral/cognitive issues and will most likely always have to be cared for by others. However, who's to say that some of that care and functioning in their future environments could be done by themselves if they learned these skills in school while they young. Whether they will be living with parents after high school or a group home or a nursing home, they should be able to make choices and contribute in whatever way possible to make their quality of life better. For example, they might be able to help w/self care - washing clothes, sorting, gathering ingredients for cooking, choosing activities, helping with errands within a community such as going to the store, making purchases and other lifetime skills.

Exceptional students require daily instruction on independent living skills.

I have one self-contained student in a resource setting, so some functional living skills are difficult to address.

These are the skills that they need to function in their everyday life. Districts need to provide programming and school settings that allow for this from elementary through high school. Too often the focus and facilities for these skills are not provide until high school. Too late if you ask me.

Because these are skills that are traditionally taught, and skills that she actually excels in, rather than skills that will not be useful for her.

My student needs to learn how daily living skills and how to become more independent.

Due to significant communication skills and his limited ability to express himself he requires constant prompting and support to make his needs known and to do any academic work.

All my students do some type of academic work, functional living skills can take place in MS or HS

After the 3rd grade, some form of functions skills training done independently of the regular classroom and curriculum is done. In the first 5 years of school, my students are getting life skills imbedded throughout their day while acquiring their basic academic skills in appropriate levels. After the 3rd grade, the content of the regular ed class does not lend itself as much to this process and additional time outside of the classroom is needed to accomplish the life skills training and make their work relate to their lives in a very concrete manner (i.e. measuring rooms to install carpet, measuring for recipes, etc.).

Students need both. To learn functional skills would also involve some academics.

Currently, teach a class of students who experience Autism but are also performing far below grade level in all academic areas.

My students are unlikely to use typical academic skills to obtain a job. They would benefit more from skills that would allow them to work in some capacity.

Because my students experience significant delays that have prevented them from acquiring

2. The students I teach need more instruction on functional living skills... continued

the needed skill. They also are more successful with consistent, repetitive practice

My students have very low cognitive ability, very poor adaptive skills, poor communication skills, and poor behavioral strategies.

We are working on functional skills that will work toward daily functionality (bathrooming, eating, etc.)

Many of my students are not able to handle daily living skills at this time. I hope they will gain in this area through education at our school in hopes by the time they graduate they will be capable of living semi independently.

Cognitive Abilities

I have OHI and LD students.

We can always do more and these children could always use more functional living skills. I am answering these questions as a school psychologist and not a teacher

I work with 2 students that require one on one aides. One student is working on daily living skills for cooking, personal hygiene and doing laundry. The other is a younger student with Down's that is working on toileting and very basic skills.

They are proficient on functional living skills.

My student has Autism and is unable to function safely without assistance all day long. He knowledge of how to be safe falls in a unsafe zone.

I am a teacher consultant and do not work with specific students.

As a high school teacher for life skills teachers by the time I receive my students in 9th grade fundamentals of reading/math... has been taught. I then need to concentrate on teaching the functional skills they need to be as independent as possible as they move towards graduation and to their adult life. My reading is based on cooking instructions, functional survival words, and reading for gaining information. Math focuses on money skills, calculator skills, time telling... Writing consists of filling out applications/info sheets, writing notes, e-mails, functional skills.

Can never work on enough living skills with intensive students.

All students, with or without disabilities need to know how to read, write and do math in life today. Without these basic skills, it is very difficult for them to find work or keep a job.

My students need to be taught how to make a bed, how to make a snack, and how to do dishes. People take it for granted that they can pick up on this like other students. They need to be taught how to do things that come naturally for other people.

My students do not learn these skills at home.

2. The students I teach need more instruction on functional living skills... continued

Although they need academic skills and exposure to an academic curriculum as well, a focus on life skills instruction will be most advantageous and meaningful to them throughout their lives.

My students are being successful on an academic track with hopes to re-enter the regular education environment with resource support.

There are aspects of daily living skills that will always need to be taught, ie, laundry, taking a shower, washing hands, etc.

My student is non-verbal and so she can't read much of the test. She will point to part of the paper without even looking at the paper. For question 3-5, maybe you can put a space to type why it is not applicable. Reading-Basic pointing to environment or signing. Math: Basic numbers recognition Writing: holding a pencil and scribbling Maybe a functional alternate assessment skill will work for some of the developmental students we have.

I teach in a resource classroom, and only one of my students needs more instruction on functional living skills. The rest receive services for academics.

They need basic skills such as getting dressed, brushing hair, how to follow directions so they can be successful at home and at school.

I do not have intensive needs students this year, just resource, but they could use functional skills to help learn independence in terms of money skills, future job opportunities, how to fill out forms...

All of the students will be asked to do simple labor jobs. They will never be asked to write a policy or read a manual.

We adequately cover functional living skills as a part of our daily program included within academic subjects.

The students I work with have severe to moderate special needs and daily skills/functional living is more of a focus along with basic academic skills.

They do not have the functional skills that are appropriate for functioning independently, even for their age (e.g. money, time, communication).

I think my students have just the right amount of life skills instruction

Some of my students have poor hygiene and are unable to take care of themselves without intense support from adults in their lives. They are involved in daily errands throughout the school building and they are making great progress. They would benefit from learning how to interact with the public in a restaurant or retail setting to acquire other functional living skills.

Students are able to manage most of their functional living skills.

I do not teach.

2. The students I teach need more instruction on functional living skills... continued

so that they will be able to function more independently with their daily living skills

They spend so much time being "pushed in" to the general education curriculum that I do not feel that they are spending enough time learning living skills.

There are not life skill opportunities available here and that is very important for students who are definitely not going to get a diploma and must be able to take care of themselves in their adult life

Mostly social skills training.

Most important for independence

The students I work with struggle with every day living skills.

Our student scheduled to take the alternate assessment this year is currently out of state at a residential facility.

They are more likely to be engaged in the learning process if the activities are relevant to their lives. However, for the students that I teach. Academics is a part of what they need to know to feel successful and included.

I think they are getting enough of this instruction currently.

They are multiple disabled and living skills are vital to life.

Most of my students will not pass the High School Qualifying Exam and receive a high diploma. The IEP teams feels that we need to focus on functional life skills rather than academics.

Because it is an area that they lack skills in and it would be in their best interest to have functional living skills.

we provide that instruction

If it takes a student 6 months to be able to sometimes correctly answer the question, what day is today, he needs more functional living skills.

Many of the students that I service have severe cognitive impairments.

Because they are ill-equipped to handle day to day living experiences.

This is what will add to the quality of their daily lives. They probably won't get a job on the basis of the reading or math skills, but they may get a job or life situation based on their daily living skills.

My elementary students are lacking in social skills and basic daily skills e.g. walking safely to/from school.

These are the skills (application of the basics) that they will use in everyday life.

2. The students I teach need more instruction on functional living skills... continued

The students I teach need instruction on both functional living skills AND academics. It is my belief that both can be taught simultaneously. My students do not necessarily "get" life skills that come to other students quite naturally- therefore they need extra practice and structure.

Students need instruction in both academics and functional living skills.

parents are requesting

What is the definition of functional living skills. It is different for everyone. They are able to do the basic skills and need help in academics and work related skills.

to be able to live somewhat independently.

There just isn't enough time in the day.....

My students are elementary and are able to dress themselves and have no problem with eating, opening containers, etc.

I work with students severe needs.

An important goal of education is to prepare students to be successful in life after school. My student is cognitively disabled to a degree that makes basic life skills much more for survival than knowing the names and dates of famous people in history(just an example). This student needs to learn how to do every day life skills, such as taking care of personal needs, how to do laundry, how to cook, how to use public transportation, etc.

Most of my students will eventually be transitioning to community based services and need full support for all basic personal care needs. Functional communication instruction and practice in appropriate techniques to inform staff of wants and needs is essential to help them reach their full potential and improve their quality of life. Allowing them to make choices and participate as much as they can in personal care helps insure respect and dignity for the individual.

Functional living skills are an important part of our student's life.

The student I have does not know her address or when to call 911.

We practice functional living skills daily and the students are doing very well.

It depends on the needs of each student. I am unable to group all of my students in one category. However, the majority of my students benefit from life skills instruction.

I don't have a scope and sequence for living skills nor do I have a set curriculum in place so it's hard to determine where I need to start and what the end result should be, like would this be acceptable or should I keep continuing on this particular skill?

I teach many students with needs similar to those on the autism spectrum. Many of these students have trouble with independence, initiation, and social skills. They need instruction in functional living skills so that they can be independent and function within the community.

2. The students I teach need more instruction on functional living skills... continued

communication skill building social skill building self help skill building

This is what my students need more than anything to help them succeed when they leave my setting.

They are adolescents. We have been working on the academics, but now we need to start teaching the academics through functional living skills. They need to become as independent as possible and have sufficient social skills to function in the world of employment.

I teach a very wide range of students in a rural setting. Some (particularly those taking the alt assessment) do not gain functional skills independently and would benefit from more instruction.

They are needing more instruction on basic skills needed to function in society such as name, address, survival signs, real world math, among other things.

Some students I teach need more instruction on functional living skills because it takes a lot of repetition for them to master a skill.

The student that I have for the AA has multiple disabilities that severely restrain her fine and gross motor skills. Thus, the past focus of her program has been solely on healthy living and functional living skills.

Many of the students have grown up in sheltered environments where many of their daily needs are taken care of for them. In addition, they all have disabilities that complicate very basic aspects of daily living for them now and on into the future. The future planning for these students needs to become more geared toward allowing this population to becoming more self-sufficient in their daily lives once they leave our doors.

They seem to pick up on functional living through daily living, but reading and math are subjects that need to be taught.

Functional living skills will be critical to these students for the rest of their lives. Other skills are nice to have but the ones dealing with everyday living are what they need to learn.

Most of the students I teach this year are resource students, not extended resource or intensive needs students.

All of my students at this time are Learning Disabled. They do not take the Alternate Assessment.

My students need instruction on basic toileting skills, dressing skills and other living skills that typical developing children have before entering kindergarten.

I have lower functioning autistic students of which three are non-verbal and one student that has some language but not always purposeful.

It takes multiple attempts for them to master skills and even more time to generalize them. There is a limited amount of time for instruction to occur during the day. Unique Learning has

2. The students I teach need more instruction on functional living skills... continued

been very helpful.

These students will be receiving services throughout their lives for living and work. The more practical the application of skills the more semi-independence they will be able to achieve.

My students have potential to have a job and to be a part of the community, however it takes them significantly longer than their average peers to learn these skills.

Students do not necessary need to be able to write from memory...computer skills are needed

My 5th grade students that are cognitively impaired are just emerging as readers at a 1st grade reading level. They need functional skills leading into middle school that will allow them to begin to be more independent of their parents in prep of food, taking care of clothing, handling money.

Many of my students have hit plateaus and despite interventions, after breaks and due to the nature of some of their disabilities there is more purpose to the hands on functional skills and representation of traditional academics than solely teaching traditional academics.

The students in my class will need more functional living skills in order to be successful when an adult.

The have Autism and have difficulty understanding people, language and the world around them.

They need help in a variety of self-help skills and in skills to help them be more independent because of physical and cognitive delays.

In order to prepare for adult life, the students need to begin working on safety, community, communication and vocational skills.

My students will always need extra instruction on functional living skills.

For #5 -- I do have my students write up to 3 paragraph compositions but I find it more functional to write about real things and therefore they write reports based on facts from simple internet searches on a topic of their choice. I prefer to have the writing class be a learning tool rather than a creative writing exercise.

I am a K-12 Advisory Teacher working with home schooled students. I provide minimal instruction to a wide variety of abilities.

Their memory is weak and they need time to practice and generalize the skills to different settings.

Most are early elementary and living skills such as taking coats on/off are dealt with with OT services.

Some have few academics but for the most part what is going to be important for their future

2. The students I teach need more instruction on functional living skills... continued

to be somewhat independent in their adult lives are functional living skills.

My students have IQ's in the severe mental retardation range.

5. My instruction in writing focuses on:

#5 writing is more focused on lists, forms, personal information - real life needs. Much of math is around money skills. Learning needs to be real life not academic for the sake of academics.

For #5 -- I do have my students write up to 3 paragraph compositions but I find it more functional to write about real things and therefore they write reports based on facts from simple internet searches on a topic of their choice. I prefer to have the writing class be a learning tool rather than a creative writing exercise.

question #5 instruction in writing focuses on enjoyment of stories. Both fictional and nonfictional. Being an active listener versus a passive listener.

7. I have sufficient access to accommodations and assistive devices when administering the Alternate Assessment.

#7- I could ALWAYS use more for student benefit.

#7: I don't feel as though I sufficient access to accommodations and assistive devices for ALL of my students taking the AA due to the limited time the AA window provides considering that our district has a spring break along with parent/teacher conferences during this window.

In reference to number 7, I personally provided many of the accommodations such as: token incentives, air filled seat cushions, weighted lap pads, chewing gum. They are items I invested in for student success in the classroom on a regular basis.

8. The student I teach who are taking the Alternate Assessment are likely to meet the academic standards assessed by the Alternate Assessment.

8 All require Extended levels of support in all areas. #10 Alternate assessment was already in place when I started.

#8 I have two students who are taking the ALT and one will meet the academic standards assessed but the other who is a 7th grader can not even recognize letters and numbers. When he was doing 5&6 grade he had a chance to pass some of it. Now he will have to take the other part that does not count.

#8 implies that because a student takes the AA that they are more likely to meet the standards and that is not the case. It depends on a number of variables and this question does not account for any of those so I marked it N/A, because there were no other choices. However, I didn't want to disagree because that doesn't mean that a student won't meet the standards either.

#8. i have several students who meet the academic standard and some that will never meet it. My population is very diverse.

#8: I appreciate (and my student appreciates) the alternative assessment. However, I still do not feel that he will be able to succeed, such as his disabilities are intense.

#8--My students who are verbal have a better chance of meeting the standards than those who are nonverbal.

For #8, this depends on the individual students and their needs. Some will meet the standards and some are not at that level yet. For #10- For the most part, my teaching practices have not changed. But, I have started focusing a little more on the skills that I think are likely to be tested.

8. Some of my students will meet standards but others will not. One of my concerns is that the alternate imposes more rigorous standards than the SBA's in some areas. For example, on the SBA's students are not judged on spelling or punctuation on the responses to the reading questions. Also if the writing is legible than the answer is judged. On the alternant, students are penalized for poor letter formation, reversals, lack of capitals and punctuation. In addition. The reading comprehension stories at the 3/4 grade levels to me seem to be far too difficult for a student with significant cognitive disabilities. 7. The state allows for sufficient access to accommodations but in reality they can be very time consuming when implementing with nonverbal students.

Questions 8, 9, 10 I am not in the classroom right now but outside of the class opinion, I see teachers: 8. disagree 9. Strongly Agree 10. Strongly Agree

9. The students I teach who are taking the Alternate Assessment are improving in their academic skills.

#9. The students in my group are not academic students. They are at a lower level.

#9- I believe my students are gaining in skills in behavior and functional life skills more than academics, most of my students are at a pre-academic level.

9. I have always believed that the children have the capacity to learn and strongly push each to their academic and personal level of achievement. We are a life skills program.

Questions 9 & 10 I did not have students taking the Alternate Assessment this year, but past students have made progression.

The phrasing on #9 is confusing.

It is difficult to answer question #9. I would strongly agree to that statement with one student and disagree with two students.

10. I am teaching differently since the Alternate Assessment was implemented.

#10 I have added a few things to my instruction but my teaching has not changed significantly. I feel the ELOS assessment only tests a student's ability to point where you tell them to, not any academic knowledge/skills

#10 I realized after taking the training that the students can learn more advanced material even if they can't read. I do need to locate and design more materials for preteen and teen interests.

#10, I teach my students academic lessons. The Alt Assess does not assess what the students are being taught. The AA has information about bar graphs and reading bar graphs, this is not appropriate for my students to have to know.

#10, the alternative assessment has helped me to identify areas of need and adapt my curriculum

#10. I have been taking many college courses during the year that influence my instruction.

#10-In my particular school, we have not yet made AYP due to a large minority ESL population and students with disabilities (intensive resource and self contained). However, I have taught more writing skills and reading comprehension since teaching in a self-contained classroom with students with either cognitive impairments and/or autism.

#10, My teaching has not changed but some of the recommendations I make as a school psychologist have changed.

Question 10: I believe and have proven intensive students can learn much higher skill levels than they are often allowed to do for a very long time. These kids deserve to have the feeling of self-worth and accomplishment. Many would deny them this, because of low expectations and the feeling that they have to be protected and they are so cute and funny. I have always expected them to learn and behave as we would anyone else. They have been amazing except for the hormonal time of puberty when they seem to forget everything they learned in the last 12 years. Fortunately, this stage does not last too long and the relearning is much easier and faster the second time around.

Miscellaneous Responses

After 12 years, this is my 1st year working with students on Alternate Assessment. My teaching has changed due to the students' IEPs, Extended GLE's and the Alternate Assessment. For #8, I wanted to agree and disagree. One of my students with a significant memory deficit will most likely not meet the academic standards addressed by the assessment. We have been working on the same stories for months and he has recently been able to remember the 3 word sentences using the picture cues.

All of the questions are situational. Depending on which child I think about when answering the question.

As stated in question 2, the two students who are capable of academic instruction in my classroom have taken the standard administration of the test. Some of their answers are not really valid because they point randomly to a picture or do not understand the question. In the past when I had students who could add or subtract still made mistakes because they couldn't generalize the skills with different materials. I do introduce some of the skills needed to use on the test throughout the school year. I would not say this improves the academic skills or any of the students other than those that were capable in the first place.

Great job in the alternate assessment.

I administer the alternate, but do not teach any students who need to be assessed on the alternate.

I am OK with the AA, but I do think the scoring could be simplified.

I am teaching differently since ASD invested in Unique Learning. The curriculum lets me focus on teaching instead of making material to use to teach.

I am teaching some of the info that is included in the AA but many of students do not understand many of the concepts included in the AA. In teaching differently I may introduce concepts they might understand but graphs/hundreds place and so many items are not important for their needs or they would understand as they continue to be more independent.

I believe for the AA to be valid, tests should be developed based on content standards but individualized performance tasks to illustrate the learning of each exceptional student.

I did not have any students this year that took the Alternate Assessment.

I do not fully understand the way the alternate assessment standards were developed, so my opinion is not based on much more than simple observation. However, it seems to me that the alternate assessment is not assessing the functional daily living skills we are teaching our students, such as making a purchase in a store, preparing a meal, managing a place to live, and independently completing job skills or accessing the community. The alternate assessment seems to me, to be assessing just a lower level of skill that the SBAs measure. If it were to really assess what I am teaching, there would be checklists or scales marking their progress in the above mentioned areas.

Miscellaneous Responses

I do not teach to a test.

I do not think the AA is testing the abilities of my students.

I don't teach

I don't teach children who take the alternate assessment, the children I teach are pre-K and k-1st

I don't teach to the test, but it is nice to know what others think is important enough to test it.

I feel the Alternative Assessment can be much more functional in nature, i.e., instead of asking our students which number is first on the number line perhaps we could ask: Which person is last in line to buy a bus ticket, and which person would I stand behind if I wanted to buy a bus ticket. or a movie ticket etc.

I had a student taking the Alternate Assessment, but he has transferred to a new school. I currently have no students taking the Alternate Assessment

I had one student who would possibly be taking the Alternate Assessment. He is currently a drop-out.

I have administered the Alternate assessment to two students and I feel that they have made gains academically since last year.

I have no students qualified for the Alternate Assessment.

I helped the State of Wisconsin write the science portion of their AA. In comparison to Wisconsin's version, I find the science section of the Alaska AA extremely ineffective. The pictures do not look like the objects they are meant to represent and the ideas / questions are vague. I do not feel as if this section of the AA accurately assesses my students knowledge in this area.

I maintain a program that is academic based at the elementary level. Reading, writing, and math are at the center of what I teach.

I teach what each individual student needs. If there are things on the test that I see are functional for them and they are struggling with I teach that. Many of the items on the AA I feel is not relevant to what my students need to be successful young adults.

I work with medically fragile -very involved students who are homebound - parents see no reason for this assessment and would like a way to opt out!

Most of these have been happening before the alternate assessment test and continue with it... I do not necessarily see it as the causative factor, I find that to be quite a leap. I do, however find the assessment useful in helping me determine IEP goals.

Miscellaneous Responses

None of my students are currently eligible for the alternate assessment. We had some disagreement as to exactly who qualifies, and who doesn't. The language is vague, while some in the district are pretty specific.

The science test is the best design for my students since it uses multiple choice pictures. The 3/4 test is more reasonable than the grade 5/6 test. The 5/6 test is much harder and longer. Students that were proficient on the 3/4 test are not on the 5/6 test. The test needs to be able to be given in a non-verbal response mode. To expect low verbal or non verbal students to say the letter sounds does not work. The assessment is still above the level of many Life Skills students and it does not measure the growth that they are making.

One of my students will never reach the academics because it goes up by grade levels and she is not up to grade level. She will always be below grade level because of the disability she is affected by.

Perhaps there should have been a question that eliminates the need to respond further, for people who don't administer the alternate assessment.

Students are making progress, but not necessarily to the level of the alternate assessment. Most students have splinter skills even at their low cognitive level.

The alternate assessment, as it is now, is entirely inappropriate for the developmental levels of my student. She was unable to do any of it independently, and when hand-over-hand assistance was given (this is truly a waste of her and my time together), she resisted.

This alternate assessment does not provide access to my students with the greatest disabilities. For those students who are able to access academics, it is appropriate. For a very small percentage of others, this test is inappropriate because it does not measure anything applicable to their lives at this point.